

Marra Farm Community Project

April 29, 2006 Community Forum/Meeting at the park

Community comments

On Saturday April 29, around 120 people attended a great community meeting for the Marra Farm Community Project, including many Mien gardeners, local neighbors, and even a large contingent of the Marra family. The 2000 Pro Parks Levy provides \$180,000 for planning design and construction of this project through the Pro Parks Opportunity Fund. Marra Farm is two adjacent properties. One is 4.58-acres that is farmed by many community organizations. To the east of the farmed property are 4.1 undeveloped acres. Both properties were originally purchased with King County Open Space Bonds. Development is restricted on Open Space Bond property – no scheduled athletic fields are permitted and only 15% of the land can be impervious surface. The Opportunity Fund project will be used to create a long term development plan for both properties as well as fund construction projects that will be built during the next year. The construction projects will include accessible paths, new park furnishings, vegetation, better parking areas, and a composting toilet. More information about the project is at: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/proparks/projects/marrafarm.htm>

On April 29, staff from Seattle Public Utilities, Department of Neighborhoods, King County, and Seattle Parks as well as volunteers from the Marra Farm Coalition who nominated the project for the Pro Parks Opportunity Fund award participated and helped to staff 10 tents with information and questions on Marra Farm history, Hamm Creek and park water use, vegetation, signs, circulation, fences, park furnishings, composting toilets, playgrounds and recreation, and farming and education programs now and in the future. All meeting material was provided in both Spanish and English. Translators for Spanish, Mien, and Vietnamese were available at the meeting. Some comments have been translated. The following are the comments and questions from the community:

Signs/ El Letrero del Parque

- I think signage should be made of special materials. I like vegetable and plant signage. Maybe some educational signage.
- Signage reflecting diversity of people who live here and use the farm
- Beyond language – artwork-symbols. I loved the board as you entered the P-Patch that had pictures of the Italian families who used to live here.
- Different language for everybody-Viet,Chinese, Spanish, Cambodian, ect.
- Signage made/decorated by community members young and old
- Maybe signs made of organic materials like recycled vegetables and plants.
- Signs-Spanish, English, Mien-Better to have more than one.

Stream, water and vegetation / Los arroyos, el agua y los vegetación

- Swales would be great and look as natural as it can be –not look as developed as the new places in the city.
- Apples need to be adequately cared for-dormant spray and basic organic fertilizing as needed.
- More farmland on plateau
- More visibility so its safer for kids (trim blackberries)
- Pathways-No wider than a sidewalk
- Parking – size is fine, need drainage so not to muddy in winter if expanding go to Plateau (non-farming land) or to field areas

Circulation plans / Proyectos para la circulación

- Easier to have small sheds where gardeners need them -1 program
- Follow Bradner Garden plans
- No paved parking lot!
- Perhaps a path/trail from Concord Elementary to farm but no pavement
- Keep paths to minimum ADA Required
- Need dog poop pick up signs and bags
- Keep it natural-no pavementPark Furnishings/ Mobiliario del parquet
- Picnic tables- while parents work in the farm kids could play- families could have outdoor activities, produce for themselves and this would help them with the high cost of living.
- Make a separate loading/unloading area from park access parking
- Connecting paths to Duwamish River Parks

Fences Composting Toilet Park furniture

Cercos Mobiliario del parquet Inodoro de compostación

- Fences to keep dogs out of garden
- Benches-all around farm for resting
- Compost-small and decentralized
- Fences-demarc program areas-4 feet is good enough-keep dogs and thieves
- Composting Toilet- with sink to wash hands
- Consider “natural furniture” eg. Log benches and/or maybe signs/furniture reflecting multiple cultures. That enjoy this park. Eg. Sculptures/artwork reflects who lives here. Totem Poles?
- Culturally –based decorative pieces –toris?
- A naturally running fountain with benches to sit next to it
- Toilet near nest end entrance of farm –natural looking fences (wood without chain link)
- Parks should take care of toilet
- Park benches, bbq, picnic tables
- Tables and BBQs near east side of farm and open area for sport activities.
- Tables, ect. You just posts in ground –No concrete.

Playground/Recreation

Campo de juego/Recreación y comidas al aire libre

- We need something for the kids to do besides run and play in the streets. Natural is good
- Playground in relation to P-Patches
- A more natural playground for kids to enjoy and learn more about farming and the watershed.
- Innovative natural playground-include multi-cultural ideas representing communities here. Like drums-played by rainwater (like Cedar Rivershed) or a Sound Garden like in Magnusson Park.
- An open meadow is a great use of property. It is versatile and can be used for community gatherings. I think the playground should be built with as much natural material as possible. (Use Waldorf playground on 50th as an example)
- Mas lugar para que los ninos jueguen playground on side.
- Keep the natural vegetation, natural as it is now.
- Playground is important-soccer, signs and slides.

- Kids area like Leschi Beach-logs, rocks and sand
- Keep the vegetation part like it is on the lower half and put a natural looking (Timber Type) playground keeping the trees and as much natural as possible with trails going from and around the playground down to the farm area.
- Make a big playground for 3 to 6 year olds on top section with a softball field.
- Meadow and basketball
- Open field with small playground and picnic tables
- Playground needs to be “safe”-a fence, not too close to the road, we want to see kids-don’t put play area on plateau! (too far keep central)
- Isabel things it would be nice to make a park with some playground for kids. Maybe a basketball court.
- I think the lower part should remain “farm” based and the upper part of the lot should have a “natural” type playground leaving existing trees with trails all over from playground to farm. No ball fields or courts either and the playground to be made out of timbers for a more natural look.
- Playground-No, because too many kids will step on gardens. No swings, no slides too crowded-But “natural” sand boxes, fallen logs, bigs

Farming/Education/Programs now and in the future **Cultivo/Educación/Programas para ahora y en el futuro**

- Look at old Marra buildings
- Decentralized composting-Yes!
- Decentralized sheds-Yes!
- Find a spot for pavilion
- Wash Stations-to wash produce before taking home, need drainage
- Learning Center-still want small area for own tools-worried about communal tools, staying in good shape. Indoor classroom/kitchen is good, need indoors toilet/plumbing in between farm plateau
- Greenhouses put far north with as much southern exposure as possible.
- As much composting as possible. Maybe a place for neighbors to bring their compostable materials from home? A large community-based compost heap. Not just composting from farm waste but neighborhood waste.
- I think the groups that one here are excellent community groups and should stay. They could benefit a lot from a learning center as well.
- A Learning center would be great addition. Over 100 kids from Concord are already coming down through existing programs and organizations, and I think these programs could be strengthened with more resources.
- Farmers Market-on site would be great and could utilize a center for onsite processing and demonstrations and educational
- Create move involvement and kids from Concord. Farmers market or produce exchange onsite for P-Patch to exchange crops.
- Farming/Education/Programs now and in the future
- Keep Concord Programs!
- Tool sheds good to lock
- One gathering area-cooking for parents
- If we have learning center, need more parking so we don’t make neighbors angry

- Marra Farm has grown from an unused, weedy stretch of land into a network of community groups doing actual farming through a truly neighborhood-centered effort. It is great to have the support, vision and resources of the Parks Department involved, but a potential loss is disconnect with the voices and hands of those who have developed these projects so far. Marra Farm is unique in this city. It is real. Don't turn it into a nostalgic farm demonstration center. The groups who are working here now have immediate ties to the land and the surrounding community. South Park is our home.
- I think it's wonderful to use this open space and turn it into a community space. Anything that encourages playing for children and a place for folks to gather would be wonderful. A restroom facility would be nice. A bike or skate facility for teens would be great- Thank You! And a play area for smaller kids.
- Pavillion/Rain shelter-Yes! In field space with picnic benches by area
- How much is the rent for P-patch, do we have to pay for water?
- Programming-keep how it is, separate but manage site collectively.
- Magnificent opportunity for having a good time with family members and friends of the project.
- Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on this important project.

